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ABSTRACT

Focusing on situational and personality factors as predictors of two common types of sales behavior (the customer-oriented/marketing approach, and the adversarial/bottom-line approach), a study conducted a national survey of advertising sales people and media buyers in the summer and fall of 1987. A total of 3669 questionnaires were sent to salespeople and 2078 to advertising agencies, with an overall response rate of 20 percent. Personality constructs were measured with 83 items drawn from various adaptive selling scales and self-concept and self-esteem scales. Situational variables were measured with open-ended questions asking the salesperson to indicate the percent of business conducted in a direct selling situation (when the client is less knowledgeable about media, has less access to media evaluation information, and is likely to view the product as an intangible) or in an agency selling situation (when the opposite is true). Sales behavior variables were measured with 73 9-point Likert scale items, reflecting either the marketing or adversarial approach. Results indicated that advertising salespeople overwhelmingly reported the use of marketing/customer-oriented behaviors in their sales interactions. Personality factors were highly significant predictors for both types of sales behavior. Situational factors were more predictive for use of the adversarial approach. (Two tables of data are included, and sales behavior and sales approach questionnaire results and 33 references are appended.) (MM)

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PERSONALITY AND SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADVERTISING SALES INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers predictors of two types of sales behaviors found broadly in personal selling--a customer-oriented approach and an adversarial/bottom line approach. It specifically examines the personality and situational factors which might be related to or predict behavior of advertising salespeople in different media and with different buyers. Advertising salespeople are found to overwhelmingly report use of marketing or customer-oriented behaviors in the sales interaction.

INTRODUCTION

Salespeople have an image of being dishonest, greedy, pushy and manipulative. The image of a fast talking, back slapping salesperson has produced a cultural attitude of low-acceptance of salespeople (Miller and Heiman 1986, Alessandra, Wexler and Barrera 1987) and sales as being a non-prestigious career (Atkins and Swan 1981,

Advertising salespeople may be in a double bind because advertising has a negative image. The average American consumer is bombarded by approximately 5000 advertising sales messages per day (The New York Times, Feb. 1988). Exposure to advertising messages may occur in our livingrooms, automobiles, and even in public restrooms. Not only are these messages pervasive, but they are considered an unwanted intrusion (Greyser, 1973).

Those who sell advertising face a combination of difficulties. Not only must they overcome a negative image of salespeople, but also must deal with this negative image of advertising. In addition they face the difficulties that many service salespeople face because the product is an intangible and buyers are relying on media support personnel for the success of the media campaign. These factors combine to make advertising a situation unique in the selling world.

Recent researchers in the sales area have pointed out the importance of examining the selling situation when studying salesperson behavior (Weitz 1978, 1979, 1981, Reeves and Barksdale 1984, Avila and Fern 1986). Weitz (1981) recommends using situational factors combined with behavioral traits of salespeople to examine sales approaches and performance.

Because the importance of situational variables is only now being discovered, there is limited research that looks at situation-specific selling. This paper will examine the advertising sales situation. Within

advertising sales two specific selling situations will be considered as factors influencing salesperson behavior. In the direct selling situation the salesperson faces a client who is less knowledgeable about media, has less access to media evaluation information, and is more likely to view the product as an intangible. In the agency selling situation just the opposite exists. We propose that the uniqueness of these selling situations combined with the personality factors of individual salespeople can be used to predict the two most common types of sales behavior, a customer-oriented/marketing approach and an adversarial/get-the-sale-at-any-cost approach. These two approaches derive from the conflicting goals advertising and most other service and industrial salespeople face of trying to meet this month's quota and still maintain a long term sales relationship with the client.

PERSONALITY FACTORS

Most of the early research in sales focused on personality characteristics and general traits of the salesperson (Harrell 1960, Greenburg and Mayer 1964, Howells 1968, Grikscheit and Crissey 1973, Lamont and Lundstrom 1977, Bagozzi 1978) as predictors of performance. Whether the salesperson was peddling advertising space or toilet paper, researchers believed they could pinpoint a set of personality characteristics that would consistantly predict sales behavior and performance.

Some of the salesperson traits considered were age, education, experience, intelligence, empathy, forcefulness and sociability. Weitz (1981) points out that studies which have tested relationships between these traits, and sales behavior and performance, have failed to uncover consistent influences related to effectiveness. In fact, empirical studies measuring the same characteristics have found highly contradictory results (Weitz 1981, Reeves and Barksdale 1984).

One of the major reasons for this inconsistency is the variety of industries in which personal selling research was conducted. These studies took very little note of the unique aspects of the industry being studied. Weitz and others propose that some salesperson traits may be predictive of performance and behavior in one situation but not in another.

In advertising sales different sets of personality characteristics and salesperson traits should be predictive of customer-oriented and adversarial sales behaviors. A variety of the personality traits found most significant in previous service and industrial selling research (Tobolski and Kerr 1952, Merenda and Clarke 1959, Harrell 1960, Kirchner et al. 1960, Greenburg and Mayer 1968, Howells 1968, Ghiselli 1973) will be tested in this analysis with advertising sales people.

H_{1A}: Age, flexibility, compassion, empathy, helpfulness, intrinsic rewards and strong work ethic will be positive predictors of marketing sales behavior.

H_{1B} Dominance, and self-centeredness will be positive predictors, and attitude toward buyers and intrinsic reward negative predictors of adversarial sales behavior.

SITUATIONAL FACTORS

The disappointing results from research which focused on the salesperson alone have lead to the more recent work which focuses on the selling situation as an important predictor of salesperson behavior and performance. Reeves and Barksdale (1984) propose a framework for classifying personal selling research which includes two-way static and dynamic approaches that focus on salesperson and customer characteristics and behaviors. Their classification of personal selling research shows that few studies have considered the customer.

Weitz (1981) proposes a contingency framework which allows for the integration of individual characteristics of the salesperson with the selling situation. The basic elements of his model include: 1) behavior

of the salesperson in the interaction, 2) salesperson resources, 3) the buying task, and 4) the customer-salesperson relationship. In this analysis we will consider the relationship between the behavior of the salesperson and the last two situational elements with the above mentioned salesperson personality characteristics.

The Buying Task--Direct vs. Agency

Weitz (1981) discusses the buying task in terms of several characteristics including the degree to which product requirements are known to the customer, the degree to which a variety of products could satisfy the customer's needs and the degree to which the customer can evaluate the performance of the product. Agency and direct customers are distinguishable on all three of these characteristics.

Agency and direct customers have completely different product requirements. The agency media buyer is purchasing numbers--ratings, target audience reach and frequency, and positioning. Because of the buyers' perception of the product as numbers, advertising time and space are perceived as more tangible for this buyer. This places the ad salesperson in a position unique among service salespeople who face the problem of intangibility of product (Shostack 1977, George et al. 1986). Most service salespeople must make the product tangible for the buyer before they can begin the selling process. Advertising salespeople do not have to overcome this hurtle with agency buyers.

The direct buyer is not an expert in media. He/She is the manager of the local car dealership or flower shop. The direct buyer is buying an image for the business and an increase in customer traffic. Direct buyers are purchasing not only the ad time and space, but often rely on the salesperson as their marketing consultant and creative director. Direct buyers do not understand the numbers and view the media in a more emotional way. To direct buyers advertising is the ultimate intangible

service. They cannot hold it or touch it or even directly observe what it is they are purchasing. With the direct customer the salesperson must overcome this barrier of intangibility not typically faced in the agency selling situation.

Agency and direct buyers also differ significantly on the number of product alternatives they will consider. The professional media buyer approaches the sales interaction with specific media goals. The salesperson typically cannot convince the buyer to buy more of his/her medium to replace another medium. Likewise if the salesperson's particular station or paper does not reach the buyer's target audience, the buyer cannot be swayed toward a another audience the vehicle does reach. The direct buyer has very vague media goals, if any at all, which can be satisfied with a variety of media and vehicles. This buyer is much more easily swayed from one medium or vehicle to another.

Product performance evaluation for the direct and agency buyer are vastly different, as would be expected from their definition of the product. The media buyer will check to ensure that the agency's spots ran as scheduled, note the positioning of the spots and do a post-analysis on the ratings acheived. The direct buyer will at most check to ensure that his or her ads are run. For this buyer the most important indicator of the success of the buy is increased customer traffic/sales.

These factors combine to depict very different buying tasks and different buyer needs. The agency media buyer's task becomes a tough negotiation for the right numbers at the right rate. The direct buyer needs to be sold on the medium, the vehicle, and sometimes even the benefits of advertising at all.

Because of the above mentioned differences between the agency and direct buying task it is hypothesized that the salesperson's percent of direct sales versus percent of agency sales will be significant predictors

of adversarial and customer-oriented sales behavior.

H_2: Percent of agency sales will be a positive predictor of adversarial behavior and a negative predictor of customer-oriented behavior. Percent of direct sales will follow the opposite pattern.

Another hypothesis concerning the agency buyer also flows from the above discussion. Because this buyer enters the sales interaction with a set product in mind and low price as a goal it is likely that he or she views the interaction as even more adversarial than the salesperson. The buyer is much less likely to try reaching out to the salesperson and helping him or her in the interaction as a way of meeting that price objective. In fact in price negotiations a common tactic is to withhold information so the seller is unaware of the buyer's true needs. This leads to the expectation that buyers will score differently on adversarial and marketing approach scales than sellers.

H_3: Media buyers will score higher on the adversarial approach scale and lower on a marketing approach scale than sellers.

<u>The Customer-Salesperson Relationship--Direct vs. Agency</u>

The predictions in H_2 and H_3 are further supported by looking at the different aspects of the salesperson's relationship with buyers. Weitz (1981) discusses several variables which moderate the customer-salesperson relationship. Relative power and conflict are two variables that have not been considered extensively in personal selling research although they have received considerable attention in social psychology (Raven and Rubin 1976) and organizational behavior research (McCall 1979, Thomas 1976).

Weitz explains that relative power in an interaction can be measured by the importance of the buyer's and seller's goals related to the buying decision, and the power they have in affecting the achievement of those goals. If the buyer is uninformed, the salesperson becomes the expert, possessing the information to solve the buyer's problem. This is analogous to the position of the direct buyer. Conversely, if the buyer

is knowledgeable, the salesperson has less power over the buyer. This is the situation the salesperson faces in an agency buy. It makes sense then, as H_2 suggests, the salesperson could approach the situation where they have power (direct selling) with a customer-orientation, and approach the situation where they have much less power ready to do battle (agency).

Another factor in the relationship which would impact the prediction of customer-oriented versus adversarial sales behavior is the on-going nature of the relationship. Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987) suggest that when future interactions are anticipated with the customer an adversarial approach would not be predicted. In advertising the relationship with agency and most direct buyers is long term. This may make the adversarial approach overall somewhat less attractive to advertising salespeople and may mediate the differences between agency and direct situations.

Differences Between Media

An important situational factor in advertising sales is the medium being sold. Ad salespeople face differences in the degree to which they compete among media and within a medium.

Newspaper representatives often do not face competition from other newspaper reps. Often there is only one major daily newspaper in a market. If a buyer wants to buy newspaper, there is little or no choice. In addition, retailers often believe they can only afford to advertise in the newspaper, which cuts down competition from other media. The newspaper salesperson focuses more on servicing the account rather than making the competitive sale. Thus newspaper salespeople are likely to be more customer-oriented and less adversarial because there are few situations in which they will have to argue the merits of their product.

In broadcasting sales the situation is quite different because there are many more choices. In television, competition may come from four or more television stations, plus multiple cable channels. In radio, the

choice is usually among any number of radio stations which have similar formats or audience characteristics. In addition radio and television compete heavily with each other and are constantly trying to chip away at the newspaper market. This increased competitive environment may increase the likelihood that a broadcast sales rep would treat the selling situation as adversarial.

Another factor which may differentiate the broadcast sales rep from newspaper reps is compensation. Broadcast salespeople are more likely to be paid straight commission, while newspaper salespeople are salaried or compensated by some combination of salary and commission (Carter 1987). This would also tend to make broadcast salespeople more bottom line oriented and less customer-oriented.

H_4 Broadcasting salespeople will score higher on an adversarial behavior scale and lower on a customer-oriented scale than newspaper salespeople.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a national survey of advertising sales people and media buyers conducted in the summer and fall of 1987. Questionnaires were sent to sales managers and media directors in all of the top fifty markets and 30 randomly drawn markets from the next 150 media markets. Within a particular market any and all newspapers were sampled and a random drawing of a third of the radio stations, half the television stations, and a third of the advertising agencies were sent questionnaires.

Advertising sales managers and media directors were asked to distribute the questionnaires to their sales people and media buyers. Attached to each questionnaire was a return postage envelope so the sales person or media buyer could return his or her questionnaire anonymously. An additional performance evaluation questionnaire was sent to the sales manager asking him or her to rate each of the salespeople filling out the

questionnaires. The sales manager only identified the salespeople by questionnaire number.

Because of the length of the sales rep questionnaire, and the time contraints most sales people face, the questionnaire was split into two forms. Each sales manager received both versions and was asked to randomly distribute them among his or her salespeople. This analysis focuses on form 1 which included the sales behavior measures.

The Sample

A total of 3669 questionnaires were sent to salespeople and 2078 to advertising agencies. The response rate for television and newspaper sales reps was 30% and 34%, respectively, after the first mailing. A second mailing was sent out to radio stations and advertising agencies. The final response rate for radio reps was 26% and for agencies, 13%. It is believed that it was more difficult to get responses from media buyers because the questionnaire was long and pertained more to their relationships with and feelings about salespeople, rather than their own jobs. The overall response rate for the study was 20%. A total of 928 usable sales questionnaires were received, 411 of which were form 1 containing the items used in this analysis. A total of 254 useable media buyer questionnaires were returned.

The final working sales sample is well distributed geographically with responses from all regions of the country. Eighty-four percent of the sample comes from the top 50 markets, 50% from the top 25 markets, and the remaining portion of the sample from markets 51 through 185. Markets were defined using Arbitron's Area of Dominant Influence designation. The sample was heavily weighted to the top fifty markets to ensure a large enough sample of reps who had at least 50% of their sales in agency business.

Demographically, the sample is 56% male and 44% female; 38% under the

age of 30, 43% in the 30-39 age group and 19% in the 40 and older age group; racially the sample is predominantly white--94%, with only 4% black and 2% hispanic or other. The large majority of the sales reps responding had a college education, 86%, and 71% of those had a degree in a field related to sales or advertising (advertising, journalism, business, marketing, or communications).

Measurement

Since no previous survey research has been done in the advertising sales area, no existing sales scales met our needs exactly. Items were drawn from a variety of personality scales and sales behavior scales and then adapted with the aid of 20 advertising salespeople and buyers in a focus group session. The questionnaires were also pretested with about 40 local and regional salespeople.

Personality Variables: The various personality constructs were measured with a pool of 83 items. The individual items were drawn from various adaptive selling scales and self-concept and self-esteem scales. Subjects responded strongly disagree to strongly agree on a 7-point Likert scale. Several negatively scaled items were included for each variable as a reliability check because of the length of the questionnaire. Personality items were often reworded to apply specifically to the sales situation to keep the respondent thinking in that vain. Examples of some of the items include:

Helpfulness: I like to help customers.
I genuinely enjoy helping people.

Dominance: I like to tell other people how to do their job.
I like to be able to persuade others to do what I want.

Flexibility: I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches.
I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.

Situational Variables: Respondents indicated which medium they sold

by answering an open-ended question (Which medium do you represent?) in the demographic section of the questionnaire.

Direct vs. agency sales was also measured with an open-ended question asking the salesperson to indicate the percent of his or her business that was direct and the percent that was agency sales. It was determined during the focus group and pretest follow-up that respondents would have no difficulty understanding the two sales situations we referred to by direct and agency.

Sales Behavior Variables: A large pool of items was developed from the extensive literature which defines customer-oriented selling, and hard-sell vs. soft sell. These items were then reworked by the focus group members and from feedback on the pretest to a series of 73 9-point Likert scale items. Subjects were asked to indicate the proportion of their customers with whom they acted in the way suggested by the statement on a True For None of Your Customers to True For All of Your Customers scale. Several of the items were reverse scaled and repeated with only slight rewording to check reliability.

Examples of the items:

Marketing Approach:	I try to help customers achieve their goals.
	I try to figure out what the customer's needs are.
	I offer the product that is best suited to a customer's problem.
Adversarial Approach:	I imply to a customer something is beyond my control when it is not.
	I try to sell as much as I can rather than satisfy the customer.
	My primary concern in selling to the customer is to get the sale.

Statistical Analysis--Scale Construction

Personality Variables: Principle components factor analysis was used on the 83 items to confirm that the items grouped together as predicted. Using varimax rotation with a minimum eigen value of 1.00 a total of 15

factors emerged. Six of these represented loadings of negatively worded or opposite items to the personality factors, one was an undistinguishable mix of items and the remaining eight matched the independent variables specified in H_1 pretty much as predicted. Factor 1 corresponded to the helpfulness construct, factor 3 could be labeled as dominance, factor 4 included the compassion items, factor 5 held most of the self-centeredness items, factor 8 corresponded to adaptiblity and flexiblity items, factor 10 included the intrinsic reward items, factor 11 contained items relating to attitudes about buyers and factor 13 dealt with empathy.

Items with factor loadings of at least .40 (+ or -) on these eight factors were then tested for reliability as scales. Scale reliabilities ranged from a standardized Cronbach alpha of .65 up to .85. Because the number of items for each scale ranged from 4 to 7, the items were added together and that sum was then divided by the number of items in the scale to standardize the measures. The scale items, factor loadings and reliability scores are reported in Appendix A.

Sales Behavior Variables: The sales behavior items were divided into the two groups of marketing and adversarial approach items. Items with only slight rewording were dropped and the 25 items with the strongest face validity as measures of each sales approach were put into a correlation matrix. Any item correlating negatively with most of the other items was dropped and the remaining items (23 marketing, 21 adversarial) were run for reliability. Initial reliability estimates for the 23 and 21 item scales were .94 and .91 respectively.

Using the correlation matrix and reliability statistics the two scales were whittled down to 11 items for the adversarial approach scale with an alpha of .80 and 10 items for the marketing approach scale with an alpha of .88. The two scales have high face validity as measures of the behavioral constructs. The items for each scale are reported in Appendix

B.

Similar analyses was run on the media buyer behavior questions to come up with marketing and adversarial approach scales that could be compared with the salesperson scales. The buyer adversarial behavior scale has items virtually identical to the sales scale. The buyer marketing behavior scale is somewhat different because a buyer who approaches the sales interaction from a marketing point of view would manifest that view with different behaviors. However, it is believed that the two scales measure the same construct of a marketing approach to the sales interaction. The buyers marketing and adversarial scales with reliability scores are reported in Appendix B.

The items in each scale were added together to generate a marketing and adversarial behavior score for each salesperson and buyer. These total scores were then used in further analysis.

RESULTS

Personality Variables and Direct vs. Agency

To test H_1 and H_2, regression analyses were run on each of dependent variables (marketing and adversarial approach) using the predicted personality factors and agency and direct percentages as independent variables. Age was also added as an indicator of experience to the list of independent variables. Tables 1 and 2 report the results from the regression analysis. As can be seen from the tables, some of the personality and situational factors are highly significant predictors of marketing approach or adversarial approach behavior.

It is interesting to note, that despite all the concern in sales literature for the situational variables, in advertising sales they are non-predictive of marketing behavior. Neither the percent of agency business nor the percent of direct business have significant betas. In fact they are not significant at all. The personality variables on the

TABLE 1
Regression Analysis of Personality and Situational Factors on Marketing Approach

Variable	Standardized Beta
Work Ethic	.202***
% Agency	.037
Age	.015
Compassion	.003
Intrinsic Reward	.091*
Flexibility	.152**
Empathy	.249***
Helpfulness	.137***
% Direct	.003
Total R^2	.30

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p.001

TABLE 2
Regression Analysis of Personality and Situational Factors on Adversarial Approach

Variable	Standardized Beta
Age	-.078 (p<.09)
Attitude Toward Buyers	.122**
Dominance	.289***
% Direct	-.207***
Intrinsic Reward	-.041
Self-Centeredness	.165***
% Agency	-.002
Total R^2	.22

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p.001

other hand predict as hypothesized, with the exception of compassion which is not significant. The personality factors suggest that salespeople who are more empathetic, get more intrinsic reward from their jobs, are more inclined toward helpfulness, and are more flexible, are also more likely to use a marketing approach in the adsales interaction.

Use of the adversarial approach is apparently much more dependent on the sales situation. As hypothesized, percent of direct sales is a highly significant, negative predictor of adversarial sales behavior. This indicates the more direct business a salesperson does, the less likely he or she is to use an adversarial approach. A predisposed negative attitude about buyers is also a highly significant predictor, so the less respect a salesperson has for buyers the more likely he or she is to treat them as adversaries. Percent of agency sales comes in the opposite sign predicted, but is not significant. All the personality factors are significant as hypothesized, with the exception of intrinsic rewards which enters negatively as expected, but is non-significant. This suggests that those who are more dominant and self-centered are more likely to use an adversarial approach to selling.

Age is an interesting factor in the adversarial regression analysis. Although only marginally significant, it is worth noting that it enters as a negative predictor indicating the longer a person is in advertising sales, the less likely he or she is to use this approach.

Marketing and Adversarial Approaches

Buyers and sellers alike in advertising sales report overwhelmingly that they behave in a marketing manner. The standardized mean for salespeople on the adversary approach scale was 3.49 as compared with 7.81 on the marketing approach scale ($t=56.12$, $p<.000$). The buyers' standardized means were 4.92 on the adversarial approach scale and 6.20 on the marketing scale ($t=13.00$, $p<.001$). In confirmation of H_3, buyers' and

sellers' means were significantly different from each other on the two scales, with buyers more likely than sellers to approach the selling interaction in an adversarial manner (3.49 vs. 4.92, t=14.89, p<.001) and less likely to approach it in a marketing manner (6.2 vs. 7.81, t=20.00, p<.001).

Differences Between Media

To test H_4, two-way analysis of variance was performed on the salesperson data with marketing and adversarial approach scores as separate dependent variables and medium as the independent variable. Gender was also added to this analysis. Neither of the main effects, nor any of the interactions even approached statistical significance for use of a marketing approach in sales. Apparently the approach is a broad descriptor of how salespeople behave across media selling situations. For those who use the adversarial approach, H_4 was partially confirmed. Both main effects of gender (F=6.04, p<.01, n=381) and medium (F=7.85, p<.000) were significant. Men (m=40.1) were more likely to use the adversarial approach than women (m=36.17) and TV salespeople (m=41.73) were more likely to use the adversarial approach than radio (m=36.4) or newspaper salespeople (m=35.75). There was no significant two-way interaction.

DISCUSSION

Marketing vs. Adversarial Behavior

The overwhelming endorsement of a marketing approach by advertising salespeople may at first appear to be somewhat surprising. The marketing approach is a costly one for salespeople to engage in because of the time and effort put into researching the client's media marketing needs and determining which products best meet those needs (Alessandra 1979, Weitz 1979, Thompson 1973). Time for the salesperson is a valuable commodity measured in number of calls made which is a direct correlate to number of sales. Each hour spent researching for one client, means several other

clients do not get called.

However, as the sophistication of the media buying and planning process increases with the introduction of computer software packages, the salesperson is forced to keep up (Ducoffe 1986). Increasingly advertising sales training programs are stressing information processing and a marketing-oriented approach (Carter 1987). Although analysis has yet to be completed on performance evaluation measures, it appears advertising salespeople are finding a customer-oriented approach successful. This interpretation is confirmed somewhat by the fact that age was found to be a negative predictor of use of the adversarial approach suggesting the more experienced salesperson stays away from that approach. Certainly the next step in this line of research is to see how each type of sales behavior influences performance.

It is interesting to note that the "tough-minded" media buyer also prefers to work with the salesperson rather than against him or her. There is an important similarity between advertising media buyers and sellers which does not exist in many other personal selling situations. Agency buyers are also sellers. Once they purchase a media schedule it must be sold to the agency client. This similarity would be expected to affect communication behaviors (Weitz 1978) between media buyers and sellers. Media buyers perceive themselves as experts and generally as more informed than the salesperson. Buyers also tend to feel that salespeople are always questioning their media decisions. This explains why they are higher on the adversarial scale than salespeople. However, because they are media salespeople too, they probably score higher on the buyer marketing scale than most buyers in other industries might, or even higher than the direct buyer would.

Personality Factors vs. Situational Factors

Personality factors were highly significant predictors for both types

of behavior. The difference between this study and most of the early studies examining personality factors is the dependent variable. We are trying to predict sales behavior rather than performance. Most of the early sales studies focused only on performance. It may be that behavior is a mediating variable between personality and performance. It certainly makes sense that personality factors are more closely related to sales behaviors than sales performance. The situational factors of direct vs. agency sales and medium were not quite as predictive as expected. None of the situational factors were related to use of the marketing approach at all. However, flexbility was an important personality predictor. It may be that behaving in a customer-oriented manner naturally includes adapting to the specific situation as well as to the individual buyer. The salesperson does not think of the customer as a direct or agency buyer, but as the next individual challenge. Other personal selling researchers have suggested that adaptability is a key ingredient to success in sales (Alessandra 1979, Weitz 1979, Thompson 1973).

It may be possible to better predict the degree to which a salesperson uses a marketing approach in a given situation with more dynamic measures such as those used by Capon and Swasy (1977) or Spiro and Perreault (1979). These researchers presented subjects with a variety of specific situations and asked how they would behave or had behaved in the past. This type of measure would be extremely difficult in a mail survey however.

The situational factors were more predictive of use of the adversarial approach. As expected at least one group of broadcast salespeople scored higher than newspaper sales reps on the adversarial approach scale. Television reps are much more likely to engage in adversarial sales behavior than newspaper reps or radio reps. This is easily explained by television's highly competitive position. In direct sales the television

rep has the toughest job because he or she usually represents the most expensive medium. It is often difficult to convince a direct buyer that television is as cost efficient as the other media. In the agency situation television reps face more competitive alternatives than the other two media. The television rep sells against all affiliated stations, independents and cable operations in the market. As was mentioned previously newspaper reps rarely have any competition in the market and radio reps only compete against other stations with similar formats or audience profiles.

Another reason radio salespeople may be less adversarial is because they often sell much more than just spot time. Their sales pitch may involve a whole marketing approach including tie-ins with newspaper ads, special promotions and live on-site broadcasts.

The percent of agency versus percent of direct sales did not turn out to be the strong predictor we anticipated with the exception of direct as a negative predictor of adversarial approach. It appears that the more direct business salespeople have, the less likely they are to use an adversarial approach. This confirms the expectation that direct clients need more attention and information in the selling process. Because of the intangibility of advertising to this client, benefits selling is vital. Media salespeople apparently do not approach direct clients only as a way of meeting this month's quota.

This research project has laid the groundwork for additional work in advertising sales and personal selling in general. Several research questions remain including the impact of each of these types of behavior on performance. Also the relationship between personality factors, behavior and performance needs to be explored further. Work needs to be done to profile the buyer, both direct and agency. While the agency buyer is easily identified and surveyed, the direct buyer is much more difficult

to identify and reach. However, it would be interesting to know how such buyers approach the sales interaction.

Managerial Implications

This research reaffirms the recommendation by Avila and Fern (1986) that sales managers need to have a clear idea of the types of selling situations their salespeople will encounter. An advertising sales manager who is trying to hire a salesperson to service mostly direct accounts would probably not want someone who endorses an adversarial approach. One way of identifying such a person might be through the personality traits of dominance and self-centeredness which can be easily measured on personality scales.

A second important fact for sales managers to consider is that most advertising salespeople say they use a marketing/customer-oriented approach to selling. This approach requires information and research about clients and the market area, as well as competitive information. If sales managers want to increase the efficiency of their salespeople they should consider making this information as accessable as possible. Training in the use of information provided by the television and radio advertising bureaus, rating services and local commerce organizations would help in this process. Larger sales operations may even want to consider hiring a sales research assistant to aid in the information gathering and digestion process. Any time that is saved in this end of the sales process can be applied directly to client interface or prospecting.

APPENDIX A

Helpful Factor

I like to help customers.	.79
Customers find me easy to talk with.	.72
Customers find me a cooperative person.	.71
I genuinely enjoy helping people.	.71
I try to establish a personal rapport with the customer.	.57
I am interested in customers not only as a customer but as a person.	.55
I am very friendly with customers.	.55

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .85

Dominance Factor

I like to be called upon to settle arguments and disputes between others.	.75
I like to be able to persuade and influence others to do what I want.	.72
When with a group of people, I like to make the decisions about what we are going to do.	.70
I like to tell other people how to do their jobs.	.56
I like to argue for my point of view when it is challenged by others.	.48

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .73

Compassion Factor

I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	.71
I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	.65
I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.	.63
I really want to be admired by others.	.47

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .66

Self-Centered Factor

Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.	.73
Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.	.61
When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.	.59
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's point of view.	.58
If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to others.	.51

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .69

Empathy Factor

When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in their shoes" for awhile.	.80
Before criticizing someone, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	.77
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	.74
I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.	.74
When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.	.60
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their point of view.	.54

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .78

Work Ethic Factor

I work very hard to complete a sale.	.74
I want very much to complete every sale.	.67
My primary concern with the customer is to help him make a purchase.	.56
I want to do my job well.	.47

Scale Reliability-Standarized Alpha .63

Flexibility Factor

It is easy for me to modify my sales presentation if the situation calls for it.	.78
When I feel my sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach.	.76
I feel confident I can effectively change my planned presentation when necessary.	.72
I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches.	.70
I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.	.68
I can tailor my sales approach to meet the needs of any sales situation I encounter.	.56
I vary my sales style from situation to situation.	.47
I find it difficult to adapt my presentation style to certain buyers.	-.45

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .72

Intrinsic Reward Factor

My job isn't very rewarding.	-.78
The sales job itself is rewarding.	.75
Selling is not much fun.	-.70
I get a lot of satisfaction and reward out of just doing my job.	.68
If I could start over, I would still choose to do the kind of work I am doing.	.63

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .60

Negative View of Buyers

Buyers aren't honest about their client's needs or budgets.	.79
I have trouble getting buyers to tell me their goals and client's needs.	.71
Buyers are more interested in what they have to say than in what I have to say.	.68

Scale Reliability-Standardized Alpha .69

Appendix B

Adversarial Approach - Salesperson

I decide what products to offer on the basis of what I can convince customers to buy, not on the basis of what will satisfy them in the long run.
Once I get wound up in a presentation, I have a hard time stopping myself.
I try to sell a customer all I can convince them to buy, even if I think it is more than a wise customer would buy.
I don't take no for an answer very easily.
I sometimes tend to dominate the conversation when interacting with a customer.
I have a tendency to exaggerate some points to get the job done.
Overpowering the customer is a sure way of making the sale.
I sometimes keep the pressure on a customer until he gives in to me.
I needle the customer for greater sales volume.
My primary concern when selling to a customer is to get the sale.
When a conflict arises with a customer, I try to win my position.

Standardized Item Alpha .80

Marketing Approach - Salesperson

I try to bring a customer with a problem together with a product that helps them solve that problem.
I ask a customer a lot of questions.
I try to get customers to discuss their needs with me.
I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.
I try to have the customer's best interest in mind.
I offer the product that is best suited to a customer's problem.
I direct the customer's attention to product features I feel are important.
I structure my presentations to guide the customer to make the correct decision.
I try to help customers achieve their goals.
I try to achieve my goals by satisfying customer's.

Standardized Item Alpha .88

Adversarial Approach - Buyer

My primary concern when talking to a salesperson is to get the best cost.
I sometimes tend to dominate the conversation when talking to a salesperson.
I have a tendency to exaggerate some points to get the best cost.
Once I get wound up in a presentation, I have a hard time stopping myself.
I stand up for my communication goals and the company's products even though it sometimes results in stepping on the media's toes.
When a conflict arises with the salesperson, I try to win my position.
I continuously update myself with the latest information in order to overcome any salesperson challenge.
Overpowering a salesperson is a sure way of making a good deal.
I sometimes keep the pressure on a salesperson until he gives in to me.
I don't take no for an answer very easily.
I needle salespeople for greater cost efficiencies.

Standardized Item Alpha .82

Marketing Approach - Buyer

I try to make media buys that have well defined objectives.
I give salespeople complete information regarding my client's objectives.
I let the salesrep tell me what vehicle features we will discuss.
We allow salespeople to pitch a client when we are present.
Salespeople inform us of new business leads.
I find information from sales and marketing trade organizations useful.
When negotiating with a salesperson it is best to be honest about client's goals and budgets.
I give salespeople enough information about client's goals in order to secure a good package.
I direct the client's attention to vehicle features which I feel are important.

Standardized Item Alpha .68

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